Oriental Bird Club

BULLETIN NO. 3
SPRING 1986

INSIDE: News & Views...Frugivorous birds ...Ladakh...White-winged Duck...Sri Lanka ...Birds of Wallacea...Reviews...Recent Reports...and more...

The Bulletin of the Oriental Bird Club is published twice yearly

THE ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB aims to:

encourage an interest in the birds of the Oriental region and their conservation.

to liaise with and promote the work of existing regional societies.

to collate and publish material on Oriental birds.

Two bulletins and a journal, The Forktail, will be published annually.

OBC Council Members

Sally Allport, Mark Cocker (Bulletin Editor), John Eames, Richard Grimmett (Chairman), Paul Goriup, Carol Inskipp (Secretary), Tim Inskipp, Paul Jepson (Sales Officer), Nigel Redman (Treasurer), Rod Martins (Membership Secretary), Craig Robson (Information Officer), Helen Taylor (Publicity Officer).

OBC Representatives

Murray Bruce (Australia), K.Z. Hussain (Bangladesh), Tan Yao Kuang (China), David Melville (Hong Kong), S.A. Hussain (India), Derek Holmes (Indonesia), Chris Murphy (Ireland), Mark Brazil (Japan), Frank Lambert and David Wells (Malaysia), Arnoud van den Berg (Netherlands), Terje Axelsen (Norway), Edgar Buensuceso (Philippines), Chris Hails (Singapore), Dr Sareth Kotegama (Sri Lanka), Per Alstrom (Sweden), Philip Round (Thailand), Robert Kennedy (USA).

The Oriental region lies mainly between 68° and 135°E, and between 10°S and 32°N. It is bounded on the west by the Indus River in Pakistan, and in the north by the Himalaya and an imprecise line in China roughly coinciding with the basin of the Yangtze Kiang. Southwards it includes the Indian subcontinent, south-east Asia, Taiwan, the Philippines, and most of Indonesia. The eastern limit is defined by Lydekker's line, beyond which very few Oriental species extend. The area between this line and Wallace's line, which marks the westward extension of Australasian forms, contains a mixture of species from both faunal regions. It is referred to as Wallacea. Because of the imprecise boundaries with the Palearctic region in Pakistan and China, the OBC is interested in material for the whole of these two countries. However, in the Club's publications the emphasis will be on the core area of the Oriental region.

T.P. Inskipp

Editorial

Bulletin No.3 maintains the range of articles, notes, reviews, and announcements established in the previous two. It is hoped that this 'mix' meets the requirements of the membership. Please feel free to say so if you think otherwise, these pages are your opportunity to pass comment upon the Club and its activities.

However, the surest safeguard of the Bulletin's standards is your effort. Fortunately, it seems that the editorial task will be a light one if contributions are offered with the same enthusiasm as in the first year. One word of request, though, in 1986 articles or short notes on identification problems would be a welcome addition.

A journal well known in Britain and Europe for the excellence of its work in this field, and for its high standards generally, 'British Birds', has recently become available to members at reduced rates. The Club's Council welcomes this offer and hopes that members will take advantage of the opportunity detailed in the enclosed leaflet.

Finally, the editors are grateful to a number of people for assistance with the production of this Bulletin, notably Malcolm Ausden, Steve Rooke, and Martin Woodcock for their excellent line drawings; Kim Lochen and Ella Schierbeek for their help in its early preparation; and then to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Conservation Monitoring Centre without whose assistance this Bulletin would not have been possible.

Club News

Membership subscription

Members who have not yet paid their membership subscription are reminded that it is now overdue. Please send us your subscription for 1986 as soon as possible. To the many who have rejoined - thank you for your support!

Change of Address

Members changing their address are reminded of the need to notify the Membership Secretary, Rod Martins. Save yourself the anguish of a mis-directed Bulletin!

Annual General Meeting

On Saturday 14 December, 1985, the Oriental Bird Club held its first annual general meeting in the Finsbury Library, London. A large audience of approximately 120 members enjoyed a programme of three speakers prefaced by Terry White of the British Library National Sound Archive, who gave a brief introduction to sound recordings of south-east Asian birds. Afterwards Drs Wim Verheugt of ICBP presented a slide-talk on Indonesian wetlands, followed by Per Alström and Urban Olsson who very kindly agreed to travel from Sweden to talk on identification problems in difficult Oriental genera.

An hour's intermission allowed the audience to break for refreshments and the club's officers to organise a raffle in aid of the Conservation Fund. Martin Woodcock kindly donated the prize - a vignette of Ibisbills, framed by Barbara, his wife - and was able to present it to the winner, Graham Clarke.

The official business of the day was concluded after the Chairman, Treasurer, and Secretary had made their annual reports to the members and both nominations to the Council and the Constitution had been proposed and adopted.

The day's events were rounded off by Paul Goriup of ICBP who spoke on the conservation problems facing India's grasslands. Particularly interesting was a very early film of two of the most threatened species - Lesser Florican Sypheotides indica and Great Indian Bustard Ardeotis nigriceps, taken by Raol Shri Dharmakumarsinhji.

Publications available through OBC

We are pleased to offer the following publications for sale. Overseas members can pay by Giro directly to Giro account no.35 234 1912. Please add £3 to non-sterling cheques for bank charges. Prices include postage and packaging.

Checklist of the Birds of Maharashta, by H. Abdulali. £1.00

Checklist of the Birds of Delhi, Agra and Bharatpur, by H. Abdulali and D. J. Pandy. £1.00

Checklist of the Birds of Borivli National Park (Bombay), by H. Abdulali. £1.00

A Selection of the Birds of Sri Lanka, by John and Judy Banks. £4.50

A Guide to the Birds of Nepal, by Carol and Tim Inskipp. £25.00

Any profits will go towards the OBC conservation fund.

Big Bird Races see rare birds and raise money

'Big Bird Races' were held last year in Hong Kong and Singapore, in which many OBC members took part.

In Hong Kong, the 'race' was held on 13 April, with seven teams participating, including the two teams which first started the idea in 1984. The winning team recorded 145 species and the overall total was 186. All teams had corporate sponsorship as well as public support, and the event raised just over HK $500,000. This money has gone towards acquiring another prawn pond for the WWF Hong Kong reserve at Mai Po.

In Singapore, five teams took part in a 'race' on 20 October. Despite the fact that there is little natural habitat remaining in the country, 152 species were recorded, including such unusual species as Chinese Egret *Egretta eulophotes*, Asian Dowitcher *Limnodromus semipalmatus*, and Chestnut-winged Cuckoo *Clamator coromandus*.

OBC 'Big Bird Race' 1986

On Saturday 24 May 1986 OBC will hold its own sponsored birdwatch to help establish its conservation fund. This will be used to assist conservation projects in the Oriental region.

The main event is centred on the north Norfolk coast, UK, under the banner "East for the East", and the UK membership is encouraged to participate. However, it should be noted that the "birdwatch" is open to all.

New editors for Bulletin and Journal

At the end of last year our editor, Dr Timothy Reed, stood down due to the commitments of a new job. OBC Council would like to thank Tim for his excellent work in 1985, which resulted in the publication of two well-received Bulletins. We are extremely fortunate to have Dr Nigel Collar take over as editor of *Forktail* and Mark Cocker as Bulletin editor. The Journal will be out in the late summer and will be sent to all members who have paid a subscription for 1985. Others who wish to receive Volume 1 may do so by subscribing retrospectively for 1985 (£6). Volume 2 will be sent to 1986 subscribers early in 1987.

1986 AGM ... and our apologies

The 1986 AGM will be held in London on Saturday, 13 December. Full details will be provided in the autumn bulletin. The meeting will be similar to our last with two or three illustrated talks, but with more time for informal discussion.

We are very sorry for the late dispatch of the autumn 1985 Bulletin and will try to ensure that this does not happen again.

OBITUARY: R. S. DHARMAKUMARSINHJI

Those who attended the OBC Annual General Meeting last December will recall the remarkable film of Lesser Floricans Sypheotides indica shot by Raol Shri Dharmakumarsinhji. Sadly, we record his death in January, following a short illness, at the age of 78. Dharmakumarsinhji was born in Bhavnagar in the Kattiawar Peninsula (Gujarat), third son of His Highness, the Maharaja Sir Bhavsinhji.

It was during his schooling in Essex, England that he acquired his love of birds and other wildlife, an interest which he pursued passionately for the rest of his life. In particular, he was one of the first serious students of bustards (he adopted the Lesser Florican as his emblem) and promoted their conservation for many decades. He carried out surveys of the Great Indian Bustard Ardeotis nigriceps[2] which led to its inclusion in the ICBP Red Data Book, and wrote a seminal paper on the behaviour of the Lesser Florican.[1]

Dharmakumarsinhji's attempts to track the migration of Lesser Floricans in the early 1950s by ringing several hundreds of them was one of the first exercises of its kind in India; unfortunately, no recoveries were obtained and their migration still remains a mystery. His Bannerman-like account of The Birds of Saurashtra, published by himself in 1954, is sure to become a collector's item. The birdlife and habitats of Kathiawar it portrays, are revealed in circumstances which will never be seen again.

Dharmakumarsinhji had an immense wealth of knowledge about Indian wildlife that will be sorely missed. Our condolences go to his family, with a deep appreciation of the contribution he made to Indian ornithology. (Contributed by Paul Goriup).

References

1. Dharmakumarsinhji, R.S. 1950 The Lesser Florican Sypheotides indica: its courtship, display, behaviour and habitats. J. Bombay Nat. Hist. Soc. 49: 201-216.

2. Dharmakumarsinhji, R.S. 1971 The Great Indian Bustard: a survey to establish its status and suggest sanctuaries. WWF Yearbook 1970/71: 85-87.

News & Views

JERDON'S COURSER STILL SURVIVES

Perhaps the most exciting ornithological event in recent times was the rediscovery in India earlier this year of Jerdon's Courser *Cursorius bitorquatus*. A single bird was caught in scrub jungle in Cuddaph District, Andhra Pradesh. There had been no recorded sightings since 1900 and the species was thought by many to be extinct.

Jerdon's Courser *Cursorius bitorquatus* (by R. Grimmett)

The rediscovery was a just reward for the Bombay Natural History Society's Endangered Species Project, whose officers had searched without success in 1975, 1976, and again in 1985. The communiqué from BNHS's field biologist, Bharat Bhushan, describes the find in exciting detail:

> "The survey was carried out in the Anantapur, Cuddaph and Nellore districts. Contact was established mainly with local shikaris who subsisted purely on small birds like partridges and quail. Three descriptions were obtained,

> one from each of the three districts. A shikari, whose description seemed accurate, claimed the bird to be nocturnal. Going out to search for game by headlight, he claimed to have regularly seen the Courser feeding.
>
> Deciding to follow up his claim, the Society set up a field station in Cuddaph District. In addition to his description the area compared favourably with Jerdon's original note about the habitat of the Courser. After some tentative searches success came unexpectedly. Using his headlight the shikari spotted a stationary bird, which he was able to pick up before it could react. I was shown the bird on the morning of the 14th, and, recognising Jerdon's Courser immediately, contacted Bombay and Dr Salim Ali."

Prior to 1900 the species was seen by few ornithologists and virtually nothing was learnt about its ecology. Let us hope that any pressure for museum collecting will be resisted and that many more birds will be located. (Source: Report on the rediscovery of the Jerdon's or Double-banded Courser by the Bombay Natural History Society, by Bharat Bhushan; ICBP World Birdwatch, Vol.8 No.1).

NO HOPE FOR HOUBARA?

This was the question asked by Pakistani writer, Ameneh Azam Ali, in the January issue of The Herald. It followed the seasonal arrival of hunting parties from Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, and another year during which the hunting of Houbara in Pakistan has not been banned.

Houbara Bustards Chlamydotis undulata are winter visitors to Pakistan from the steppes of the USSR where they have declined dramatically in recent years. Hunting at an ever-increasing level of sophistication has, nevertheless, continued in Pakistan (though local hunters are not allowed to take the bird). It has long been argued that a temporary ban was needed to assess the bird's status and to prepare conservation management recommendations, and that this was in the best interests of the hunters, the Pakistani Government and the Houbara. However, despite government concern, expressed even by President Zia ul Haq himself, no strict control over the killing has been forthcoming. (Source: The Herald, January 1986).

AMAMI WOODCOCK DESERVES OFFICIAL RECOGNITION

The Ryukyu Islands off southern Japan lie just within the Oriental region and are home for the little-known Amami Woodcock *Scolopax mira*. Until recently it was known only from the island of Amami, but since 1981 has been regularly observed on Okinawa. According to Mark Brazil, a biologist working for TRAFFIC (Japan), it is mistakenly considered to be a subspecies of the Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola* and thus does not qualify as a 'national monument'; a designation bestowed by the Japanese that would give protection and prohibit hunting. Such recognition is needed, irrespective of taxonomic status, and the Japanese Government should be urged to give protection for the species and its island habitat. (Source: *BBC Wildlife*, January 1986).

WHITE-WINGED DUCKS IN THAILAND

The remarkable news that three White-winged Ducks *Cairina scutulata* were captured in December 1985 near the Thai-Kampuchean border was reported in the Bangkok Post on January 4. The ducks, one male and two females, were caught in Nam Yuen District of Ubon Ratchathani. This is the only record of the species in Thailand for many years, and previously it was feared they were extinct in the country.

However, some doubt surrounds the record: Phil Round of the Thai Association for the Conservation of Wildlife felt it a possibility that the birds were acquired in Kampuchea by refugees, as there is significant traffic in wildlife from there. What is surprising is that the birds were taken for captive breeding: Thailand already has a captive-bred stock, and intends to reintroduce the species to areas such as Nam Yuen.

FINAL REPRIEVE FOR SILENT VALLEY?

In September 1985 India's Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, inaugurated the Silent Valley National Park in Kerala, Southern India. The area is now part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, one of twelve such reserves being established in the country.

Silent Valley, famed for supporting a considerable variety of plants and animals, including a significant number of bird species endemic to the Western Ghats, was threatened by plans to dam the Kuthipuzha River for hydroelectricity. This latest move follows protracted opposition to the dam project by Indian conservationists and will hopefully ensure the full preservation of this remote, uninhabited region. (Source: *IUCN Bulletin* Vol.16 Nos.10-12).

FRUGIVOROUS BIRDS AND FIGS IN THE ORIENTAL REGION

Fig-bearing trees are identified as an important food source for many species of bird. The author suggests various aspects of the subject which warrant further research.

Lineated Barbet Megalaima lineata on Fig (by S. Rooke)

Figs are members of the pantropical genus Ficus which embraces about 600 species, the majority of which are native to the Indo-Malesian region. In Peninsular Malaysia alone there are over 100 species. They are found in all types of forest, and are frequently planted around villages, temples and town parks.

Fruiting fig trees can easily be recognised by the unique structure of their fruit, which have the remains of the minute flowers set inside the fleshy carbohydrate-rich fig. The presence of (usually white) latex and ring-like stipule scars at each node are further aids to identification. Many species are climbing epiphytes or 'stranglers', growing on other trees; these are perhaps the most interesting ornithologically, especially the latter, which can easily be spotted by non-botanists.

Stranglers start life in the canopy of a host tree, their roots growing down to the ground while adhering to the host tree's trunk. In later stages a matrix of roots may totally engulf the host, which eventually dies, leaving the fig tree to grow independently. The so-called 'banyans', typical of Hindu temple grounds and parkland, also develop pillar-roots which drop to the ground from branches in the canopy.

Not all fruiting fig trees attract birds: those that do generally possess fruit which, when ripe, ranges from red to black in colour. The main exceptions are some of the banyans which produce yellowy-green or pinky fruit. The range of fruit size varies considerably among species. Smaller figs of 0.5 to 2.0 cm diameter attract mainly small birds such as Bulbuls Pycnonotidae; while species with fruit of up to 3 or 4 cm in diameter are avidly sought by birds such as Hornbills Bucerotidae and the larger Pigeons, e.g. Treron and Ducula spp. When the fruit is fully ripe, the larger fig trees are centres of great frugivore activity, sometimes involving hundreds of Treron pigeons. Their vocalisations are often a good guide to locating such trees. In Malaysia, Treron pigeons arrive just after dawn and generally feed until about 0900 hrs. They then discontinue activity often until 1700 hrs, though there is sometimes a small burst of activity at 13-1400 hrs. Not all birds follow this pattern, however, Hill Mynas Gracula religiosa, for instance, largely visit fig trees in the afternoon. As a rule, the peak period of bird activity is between half an hour after dawn and mid-morning, nevertheless various numbers of frugivorous birds visit trees at all times of the day.

In Malaysian lowland forest I have recorded 52 bird species eating figs, 49 being lowland residents; one, Eye-browed Thrush Turdus obscurus, a migrant, and two, Mountain Imperial Pigeon Ducula badia and Buff-bellied Flowerpecker Dicaeum ignipectus, nomadic species wandering from their breeding zones in montane forest.

Not all of these species are regular visitors to fig trees. Some, such as Slender-billed Crow Corvus enca, Diard's Trogon Harpactes diardii, and Sultan Tit Melanochlora sultanea feed on figs very rarely. Others such as Brown Fulvetta *Alcippe brunneicauda*, the Leafbirds Chloropseidae, Dark-throated Oriole *Oriolus xanthonotus*, and several species of Bulbul (e.g. Hairy-backed Bulbul *Hypsipetes criniger*, and Yellow-bellied Bulbul *Criniger phaeocephalus*), although frequently encountered at fig trees, are mainly insectivorous, and only feed on figs in an opportunistic manner.

The really 'regular' fig-eaters in Malaysian lowland forest are members of the three families hornbills Bucerotidae, barbets Capitonidae, flowerpeckers Dicaeidae, many of the *Pycnonotus* bulbuls, and the highly specialised frugivores: the Large Green Pigeon *Treron capellei*, Little Green Pigeon *T. olax*, Thick-billed Pigeon *T. curvirostra*, Jambu Fruit-Dove *Ptilinopus jambu*, Green Broadbill *Calyptomena viridis*, Asian Fairy-bluebird *Irena puella*, and Hill Myna.

Fruiting fig trees provide excellent opportunities to observe these specialised frugivores, as well as other wary species such as Rhinoceros Hornbill *Buceros rhinoceros* and Helmeted Hornbill *Rhinoplax vigil*. The Blue-crowned Hanging Parrot *Loriculus galgulus* also regularly eats figs, however, it appears to utilise only the dull-coloured fruit produced by the banyans. In addition to the above species, feeding on the fallen, over-ripe fruit beneath the fig trees, both Crested Fireback *Lophura ignita* and Green-winged Pigeon *Chalcophaps indica* are regularly observed.

The exploitation of fruiting fig trees is not a habit confined to the bird communities of Malaysia's lowland forest. Yellow-vented Pigeon *Treron seimundi* and Pink-necked Pigeon *T. vernans*, birds respectively of Malaysia's submontane forest and open parkland, both eat figs. Elsewhere in the Oriental region wintering Palearctic thrushes *Turdus* regularly feed on them. Furthermore I would anticipate that both Pin-tailed Pigeon *T. apicauda* and Orange-breasted Pigeon *T. bicincta* of the Himalayan terai share their congeners' fig-eating habits. Equally, one would expect to find the four species of *Cochoa*, which are all thought to be highly frugivorous, utilising fig trees.

To conclude, fig trees are important sources of food for many avian frugivores and deserve further study by both amateur and professional ornithologists. It is therefore hoped that this article will help focus attention on a subject that might be rewarding to the field worker.

Frank Lambert, Jabatan Zoologi, University Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

MIGRATION THROUGH THE NORTH-WEST HIMALAYAS - SOME RESULTS OF THE SOUTHAMPTON UNIVERSITY LADAKH EXPEDITION. PART 2

The first part of this article, together with a map, appeared in Bulletin No.2. In this second half there is a review of visible migration and mention of four species new to the Indian Subcontinent. Later discussion considers the source and route of the migrants.

Although no large flocks of birds of prey were seen, raptor passage was very varied with eight local and seventeen non-local species recorded. No harriers breed in Ladakh but up to seven Marsh Harriers Circus aeruginosus a day were recorded on autumn passage from mid-August. Smaller numbers of Hen, Montagu's and Pallid Harriers C. cyaneus, C. pygargus and C. macrourus moved through later. By October, the commonest migrant raptors were Goshawk Accipiter gentilis, Sparrowhawk A. nisus and Long-legged Buzzard Buteo rufinus, all of which over-wintered in small numbers along with Merlins Falco columbarius. The most notable of the less common migrant raptors in the autumn were Black-shouldered Kite Elanus caeruleus, Crested Honey Buzzard Pernis ptilorhyncus, Egyptian Vulture Neophron percnopterus, Short-toed Eagle Circaetus gallicus and Osprey Pandion haliaetus. While harriers were rare on spring migration, there were larger numbers of Black Kites Milvus migrans and Booted Eagles Hieraaetus pennatus, as well as our first records of Steppe Eagle Aquila rapax, Pallas' Fish-Eagle Haliaeetus leucoryphus and Cinereous Vulture Aegypius monachus.

Black Kite Milvus migrans

(by M. Ausden)

Visible migration was almost invariably increased by low cloud: this was particularly true for Common Swifts *Apus apus*, movements seen in 1980 involving thousands of birds. Parties of Alpine Swifts *A. melba* and smaller numbers of Fork-tailed Swifts *A. pacificus* were also seen. Late spring passage included small flocks of European Bee-eaters *Merops apiaster* and one or two Blue-cheeked Bee-eaters *M. superciliosus* on several days. Other rare non-passerine migrants were Long-eared and Short-eared Owls *Asio otus* and *A. flammeus* and Collared, Western Turtle and Laughing Doves *Streptopelia decaocto*, *S. turtur* and *S. senegalensis*.

The commonest passerines nesting in the Tikse plantation were Mountain Chiffchaff *Phylloscopus sindianus*, Hume's Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca althaea*, Bluethroat *Erithacus svecicus* and Common Rosefinch *Carpodacus erythrinus*. In winter these were replaced by large numbers of altitudinal migrants. By far the most abundant of these were Güldenstadt's Redstarts *Phoenicurus erythrogaster*. Streaked Rosefinch *Carpodacus rubicilloides* and Brown Accentor *Prunella fulvescens* were also very common. All three species almost certainly came from the Tibetan Plateau as well as Ladakh.

Güldenstadt's Redstart *Phoenicurus erythrogaster* (M. Woodcock)

Two other common altitudinal migrants in the plantation were Robin Accentor *Prunella rubeculoides* and Stoliczka's Tit-warbler *Leptopoecile sophiae*. In the more open habitats flocks of Horned Larks *Eremophila alpestris* replaced the breeding Oriental Skylarks *Alauda gulgula* and Hume's Short-toed Larks *Calandrella acutirostris*. Harsh weather in mid-winter also brought Alpine

Accentor *Prunella collaris*, Blackish-winged Snowfinch *Montifringilla adamsi*, Brandt's Mountain Finch *Leucosticte brandti* and other mountain breeders into the valley.

Among the non-local migrant passerines Sylviidae (11 species) and Turdidae (7 species) were the main groups. The non-local warblers on autumn passage, all of which were ringed, included three Garden Warblers *Sylvia borin* (1980 and 1981) and two Sedge Warblers *Acrocephalus schoenobaenus* (1981), both new for the Indian Subcontinent, and Black-browed Reed-Warbler *A. bistrigiceps*, very unexpected because of its far-eastern breeding range. Other rarities were a single Great Reed-Warbler *A. arundinaceus*, a Dusky Warbler *Phylloscopus fuscatus*, and a few Barred Warblers *Sylvia nisoria*. Regular features of the migration were Blyth's Reed-Warblers *Acrocephalus dumetorum*, Paddyfield Warblers *A. agricola*, Siberian Chiffchaffs *Phylloscopus collybita tristis*, and non-local races of Greenish Warbler *P. trochiloides viridanus* and Lesser Whitethroat (mainly *Sylvia curruca blythi/margelanica* intergrades). Spring warbler passage was disappointing, with only single records of three non-local species, though one of these was a Common Whitethroat *S. communis*.

Black-throated Thrushes *Turdus ruficollis atrogularis* arrived in good numbers during September and October while some over-wintered. Later in the season towards early spring they were joined by occasional Red-throated Thrushes *T. r. ruficollis* and Naumann's Thrushes *T. naumanni naumanni*. One of the highlights of the expeditions was the first Song Thrush *T. philomelos* for the subcontinent, which arrived at Tikse in November 1981 and was eventually ringed in mid-December. In the spring we also recorded Dusky Thrush *T. naumanni eunomus* and Tickell's Thrush *T. unicolor*. Other non-local Turdidae included regular Isabelline Wheatears *Oenanthe isabellina* and Siberian Stonechats *Saxicola torquata maura*; then in the spring a Rufous-tailed Rock-Thrush *Monticola saxatilis* and three Common Redstarts *Phoenicurus phoenicurus*.

A fourth new species for India was a male Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella* which turned up in December 1981 with the Pine Buntings *E. leucocephala* that roosted in the plantation from November. Little Buntings *E. pusilla* and Common Reed-Buntings *E. schoeniclus* occurred very occasionally and a few Spanish Sparrows *Passer hispaniolensis* roosted in the plantation in late winter. Very few non-local finches were recorded, though we did see the second Linnet *Carduelis cannabina* for Ladakh in early summer 1982 (the first having been recorded a few days previously by Fairbanks, Mills, and Preston). Interestingly, Mongolian Finches *Rhodopechys mongolica*, which are usually winter visitors to Ladakh, were quite common at this time.

In the autumn, migration by the Motacillidae was dominated by large movements of Tree Pipits *Anthus trivialis* and of local White and Yellow-hooded (Citrine) Wagtails *Motacilla alba* and *M. citreola*. Spring passage was much more diverse with good numbers of Rosy Pipits *Anthus roseatus* and Red-throated Pipits *A. cervinus* with some Water Pipits *A. spinoletta*. Since the wagtails were in breeding plumage many could be identified to subspecies in the field. Early passage of White and Yellow-hooded Wagtails consisted mainly of *M. a. personata* (a rare breeder in Ladakh) and *M. c. citreola* (a non-local race), while the common Ladakh races *M. a. alboides* and *M. c. calcarata* arrived later. Two other non-local races of *M. alba* were also recorded. Yellow wagtails *M. flava* of the races *M. f. beema* and *M. f. thunbergi* also appeared. The spring was also unexpectedly good for shrikes, with Red-backed *Lanius collurio*, Isabelline *L. isabellinus*, and Lesser Grey *L. minor* all being recorded.

Barn Swallows *Hirundo rustica* do not breed locally but flocks of over 300 built up during cloudy weather in late August 1981. While hirundine passage was seldom on this scale, it was, however, quite varied, with regular appearances of non-local Red-rumped Swallows *H. daurica*, Sand Martins *Riparia riparia*, and Plain Martins *R. paludicola*, in addition to a single Wire-tailed Swallow *Hirundo smithii*. Other non-local passerines included regular Black-throated Accentors *Prunella atrogularis* in October and Common Starlings *Sturnus vulgaris* in November; very occasional Brahminy Starlings *S. pagodarum* and Rosy Starlings *S. roseus*, with single records of Bimaculated Lark *Melanocorypha bimaculata*, Red-throated Flycatcher *Ficedula parva*, Common Jackdaw *Corvus monedula*, and House Crow *C. splendens*.

It appears that migration through the study area is generally a broad-front movement across, rather than along the Indus Valley, an inference supported by observations of the flight direction of most non-local migrants. Equally it seems likely that under normal, clear conditions a significant proportion of migrants fly over without stopping, since visible migration increased considerably during low cloud. Given the relatively short distance between southern Sinkiang and the north Indian lowlands (c. 600 km) many migrants may cross Ladakh in a single, non-stop flight.

No long-term monitoring of migration has been done in the western part of the Tibetan region before, though Ludlow (1927, 1928) recorded migration in south Tibet for several years. This work was less intensive than our own study, and so not strictly comparable, but it seems that migration across Ladakh is much more diverse than around Gyangtse, probably because migrants crossing the western Himalayas avoid the Tibetan Plateau.

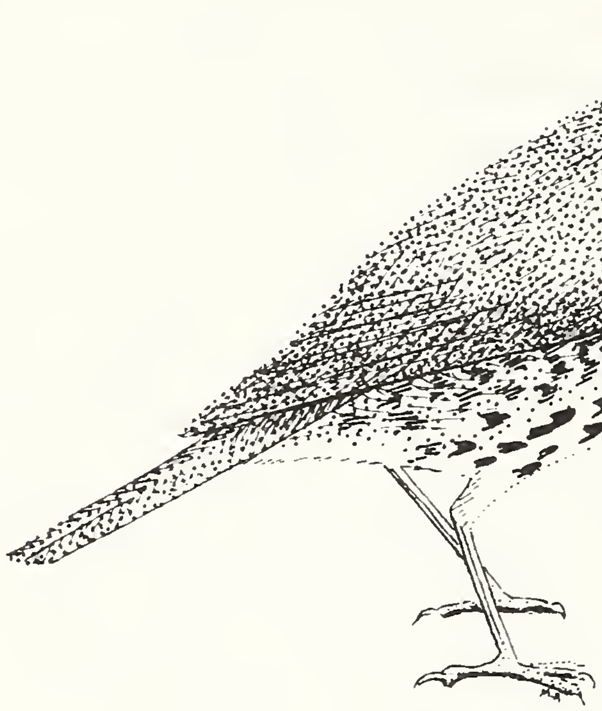
Many of the areas north of Ladakh are little known ornithologically, which makes it difficult to assign source areas for many of the non-local migrants we recorded. Siberia was undoubtedly the breeding area of most of the waders and wildfowl but many of the other wetland species and the steppe species may well have come from southern Sinkiang. This region lies immediately north of the Karakoram and is boxed in by the Pamirs to the west and the Tien Shan range to the north, and is a very likely source area. The Tien Shans contain the nearest large forested areas to the north of Ladakh and these are the most likely origins of many of the woodland species. But from their known breeding ranges some of even the smallest passerines must have come from further north. Not surprisingly, species with exclusively far-eastern Palearctic breeding ranges were almost completely lacking, but what was particularly unexpected was the occurrence of several species breeding north of the Tien Shans and wintering in Africa. A few of the species seen, especially in the spring, may have been vagrants from lowland India: a Common Koel _Eudynamys scolopacea_ was the most obvious of these.

Finally, we can thoroughly recommend Ladakh to anyone considering further work in the region. Though the species diversity is poorer than in lowland India, this is compensated by the combination of unexpected migrants and little-known high-altitude breeding species, and by spectacular scenery and some of the most hospitable people on earth. If you are considering ringing birds, we have a word of warning: be prepared for a lot of net-mending - yaks and goats are magnetically attracted to mist-nets!

Ornithologists on the expeditions were: Simon Delany (1977, 1980, 1981-82), Clive Denby (1976, 1980, 1981-82), Sue Elliott (1981), David Garbutt (1981), John Norton (1980), Andrew Phillips (1976), Clare Sulston (1981-82), Charles Williams (1977, 1982). We also had valuable assistance with the fieldwork from Keith Godfrey and Paul Harvey in 1980, and Simon Lawrence, Christine Matthews and David Mallon in 1981, and have included their records with our own.

Achnowledgements

We would like to thank all those in India and Britain whose help made the expeditions possible, in particular all the institutions who awarded us grants, our home agents Mr E. Gordon and Dr S. Wratten, the Bombay Natural History Society and the Leh Forestry Department staff, especially Mr Tsering Narbu.



Song Thrush Turdus philomelos (by M. Ausden)

References

1.Ali, S. & Ripley S. D. (1968-74). Handbook of the Birds of India and Pakistan. Oxford University Press.

2.Ludlow, F. (1927, 1928). Birds of the Gyangtse neighbourhood, Southern Tibet. Parts 1-3. Ibis, 1927: p.644-659; 1928: p.51-73 & 211-232.

3.Vaurie, C. (1972). Tibet and its Birds. H. F. & G. Witherby.

C. Williams and S. Delany, 85 St Philips Road, Cambridge.

We apologise for an error in the first half of this article in Bull. No.2 on page 11, line 15. This sentence should have read: "The western arm of this pincer movement is thought to avoid the Pamirs and enter the lowlands of Pakistan via Afghanistan, 600 km west of our study area in central Ladakh."

RECORDS OF THE WHITE-WINGED DUCK CAIRINA SCUTULATA IN SUMATRAN PEATSWAMP FOREST

The rare White-winged Duck Cairina scutulata has recently been found in a protected area within eastern Sumatra's lowland peatswamp forests, indicating for the first time the use of this forest-type by the species.

The sightings were made in the Padang-Sugihan Wildlife Reserve, in Indonesia's South Sumatra province. At least four birds, including one pair, were seen over six occasions in the space of two months, between 3 March and 2 May 1985. The birds were either seen perched in the peatswamp forest, or flying to or from the forest. Slightly more than half of the reserve's 75,000 ha is composed of logged-over peatswamp forest, a forest-type that in 1982 was still estimated to cover 670,000 ha in the province (FAO 1982).

In recent years in Sumatra, Holmes (2,3) reported finding this species in swamp near a grove of open woodland and secondary growth in Jambi province, and in several localities in Lampung province, where the ducks were found to inhabit areas in, or adjacent to, freshwater swamp, including the Way Kambas Reserve. The Padang-Sugihan birds are the only recent records for South Sumatra province, which lies between Jambi and Lampung.

The White-winged Duck was originally widespread in South-East Asia, but is now restricted to isolated parts of Assam, Burma, Bangladesh, Java, and southern Sumatra. Hunting and habitat destruction have been identified as causes of the bird's decline, the latter being most critical at this time.

Although it is encouraging that this duck is also found in peatswamp habitat, the future of the species in the wild remains uncertain. Outside of the two protected areas, suitable White-winged Duck habitat is being converted to settlements and agricultural projects, and just how widespread the bird is in Sumatra's remaining peatswamp forests is not known.

Stephen V. Nash and Anne D. Nash, c/o PO Box 133, Bogor, West Java, Indonesia.

References

1. FAO (1982). National Conservation Plan for Indonesia, Vol.2, Sumatra. FAO, Bogor.

2. Holmes, D.A. (1976). A Record of White-winged Wood Duck Cairina scutulata in Sumatra. Bull. Brit. Orn. Club 96: 88-89.

3. Holmes, D.A. (1977). A Report on the White-winged Wood Duck in southern Sumatra. Wildfowl 28: 61-64.

Birdwatching areas

SRI LANKA - A NOTE ON SOME BIRDWATCHING AREAS

The authors, who have lived in Sri Lanka for much of their lives, provide a brief introduction to the country's birds.

Sri Lanka has a checklist of 427 bird species and subspecies of which 20 are endemic and 170 are winter visitors. The country's national parks, which constitute about 12% of the total land surface, are generally situated in the northern and eastern districts of the island and are currently closed to visitors due to recent political troubles. Indeed, only the western section (Block I) of the Ruhunu (Yala) National Park is open to visitors at the time of writing, and is therefore seriously over-visited. However, these national parks remain the best places to see Sri Lankan fauna such as Asian Elephant Elephas maximus, Leopard Panthera pardus, Sloth Bear Melursus ursinus, and Mugger Crocodile Crocodylus palustris.

Yet this is not always the case with Sri Lanka's avifauna. For example, most of the birds of Wilpattu National Park can be seen around the ancient rock fortress of Sigiriya during a walk through the ruins and the adjacent jungles. The same birds can also be seen on a visit to the ruined city of Polunnaruwa. The two locations, Sigiriya and Polunnaruwa, should produce most of the low country dry zone birds. In fact, on a 3-day visit to Sigiriya in the recent past, we recorded over 80 species.

White-browed Fantail Rhipidura aureola (by S. Rooke)

The birds of the area would include the Common Iora *Aegithina tiphia*, Crimson-fronted Barbet *Megalaima rubricapilla*, Small Minivet *Pericrocotus cinnamomeus*, White-browed Fantail *Rhipidura aureola*, Asian Paradise-Flycatcher *Terpsiphone paradisi*, Black-rumped Goldenback *Dinopium benghalense*, Black-hooded Oriole *Oriolus xanthornus* and, perhaps, a few raptors including the Changeable Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus cirrhatus*. The Sigiriya forest should also produce the Greater Racket-tailed Drongo *Dicrurus paradiseus*, the White-rumped Shama *Copsychus malabaricus* (a beautiful songster), and the Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*, which habitually nests on the north face of the rock massif.

To see the birds of the lower hills (mid-country), a visit to Kandy is recommended. The visitor might also like to visit the Temple of the Tooth, (where the Buddha's tooth relic is housed) and witness some Kandyan drumming and dancing when not looking for birds in the Udawatakelle Forest Reserve, situated almost within Kandy town, or at the Peradeniya Botanical Gardens. These areas should produce the Yellow-fronted Barbet *Megalaima flavifrons*, Layard's Parakeet *Psittacula calthorpae*, Ceylon Hanging Parrot *Loriculus beryllinus* (all endemic species); also the Alexandrine Parakeet *P. eupatria*, Plum-headed Parakeet *P. cyanocephala*, Black-naped Monarch *Hypothymis azurea*, and a large colony of the Indian Flying-fox *Pteropus giganteus*.

Spot-winged Thrush *Zoothera spiloptera* (by R. Grimmett)

To see the birds of the high hill country, it is necessary to travel up to Nuwara Eliya (elevation 1860 m) in the middle of the main tea-growing districts. At that elevation there are several endemic species to be seen, including the Ceylon Wood-Pigeon *Columba torringtoni*, Ceylon Magpie *Urocissa ornata*, Yellow-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus penicillatus*, Dusky-blue Flycatcher *Muscicapa sordida*, Ceylon Whistling Thrush *Myiophoneus blighi*, Spot-winged Thrush *Zoothera spiloptera*, and the Ceylon White-eye *Zosterops ceylonensis*. It is in the hills that a keen-eyed observer might see the Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis*, the Rufous-bellied Eagle *Hieraaetus kienerii* or the Black Eagle *Ictinaetus malayensis*.

In the southern regions, along the south coast, there are a number of interesting birding areas. At one time the only place where the Black-necked Stork *Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus* could be seen regularly was in the Yala National Park, but there is now a resident male (maybe a female also) in the Bundala Bird Sanctuary which lies between Hambantota in the west and Bundala Village in the east. This sanctuary consists of four large waterways (one fresh; three saline) surrounded by a thin skirting of forest which still harbours a few resident elephants. It is also visited periodically by herds on migration, and up to 82 animals have recently been counted at a single waterhole. This sanctuary is the home of every species of waterbird resident in the country and, during the northern winter, it is the final destination for countless numbers of waders of virtually every species yet recorded in Sri Lanka. Vagrants turn up occasionally, and amongst those reliably reported from the area are the Caspian Plover *Charadrius asiaticus*, Common Ringed Plover *C. hiaticula*, Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*, Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*, Red Knot *Calidris canutus*, Broad-billed Sandpiper *Limicola falcinellus*, Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis*, Red-necked Phalarope *Phalaropus lobatus*, Spoon-billed Sandpiper *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus*, and the Eurasian Oystercatcher *Haematopus ostralegus*. The Greater Flamingo *Phoenicopterus roseus* is a beautiful sight in massed flight (1500 seen in 1985), and both the White-bellied Sea-Eagle *Haliaeetus leucogaster* and Brahminy Kite *Haliastur indus* are breeding residents.

The population of birds at Bundala at any time of year is obviously seasonal and dependent to a large extent on the water levels in the main waterways. There are jeepable tracks through the sanctuary's jungle areas and jeeps can be hired at Wira Wila or Tissamaharama, but they are all somewhat battered and old. It is also possible to hire a bicycle for a tour of the sanctuary but care must be taken to avoid bumping into elephants. The sanctuary has a large population of Mugger Crocodiles and a few Estuarine Crocodiles Crocodylus porosus. The latter in particular have a tendency toward man-killing so bathing in the waterways is not recommended.

Red-necked Phalarope Phalaropus lobatus (by M. Ausden)

There is an interesting bird sanctuary westward along the coast at Kalametiya, near Tangalle. This is a swampy area with extensive reed-growth which is much favoured by the Clamorous Reed-Warbler Acrocephalus stentoreus, and the mangroves provide roosts for countless water birds - egrets Egretta, storks Ciconiidae, herons Ardeidae, cormorants Phalacrocorax and pelicans Pelecanus. It is also favoured by Lesser Whistling Duck Dendrocygna javanica, Common Moorhen Gallinula chloropus, Purple Swamphen Porphyrio porphyrio, Pheasant-tailed Jacana Hydrophasianus chirurgus, and Darter Anhinga melanogaster. The White Stork Ciconia ciconia, a few Sand Martins Riparia riparia and a pair of Golden Orioles Oriolus oriolus were recorded there in 1984/85. It is also possible to see most of the water birds listed above at the Attidiya Swamps situated about seven miles south of the centre of Colombo.

A visit to the Sinharaja Forest, a rain forest, brings the possibility of seeing most of the endemic species, and it is possible to gain access to this small forest by means of abandoned logging roads. To maximise the chances of seeing the birds the visitor should arrive at first light. Unfortunately, the nearest accommodation is at Ratnapura, some 40 miles away, and this means an early (0330 hrs) start, with a packed lunch, and the prospect that it will rain on most days from about 1200 hrs onwards. With luck the following endemic species can be seen: Ceylon Spurfowl *Galloperdix bicalcarata* (it is more often heard than seen), the Ceylon Junglefowl *Gallus lafayettei*, Green-billed Coucal *Centropus chlororhynchus*, White-faced Starling *Sturnus senex*, Ceylon Myna *Gracula ptilogenys*, Brown-capped Babbler *Pellorneum fuscocapillum*, Orange-billed Babbler *Turdoides rufescens*, Ashy-headed Laughing-thrush *Garrulax cinereifrons* and White-throated Flowerpecker *Dicaeum vincens*. The Sinharaja Forest is also the home of the endemic Purple-faced Langur *Presbytis senex* and supports a few leopards. About 60% of the flora and insects are also endemic to the area, which has been earmarked to receive World Heritage status.

By visiting the various locations mentioned above, it should be possible to see some 200-220 species over a period of two to three weeks during the northern winter season and maybe 180-190 species at other times of the year. In the process, the visitor will have absorbed a fair amount of culture; passed through the main coconut, rubber, and tea-growing districts, as well as seeing the hills and the lowlands. Furthermore, if the visit is made from January to mid-March there should be sunny days and starlit nights. After mid-March the temperature and humidity rises until the south-west monsoon breaks in the second half of April. However, bird life is abundant throughout the year for this is a Buddhist country and birds are very seldom intentionally killed.

John and Judy Banks, 142/20 Polhengoda Road, Colombo 5, Sri Lanka.

John and Judy Banks have kindly prepared information sheets that give more details on birdwatching in Sri Lanka and on some of the birdwatching localities mentioned in the text. This is available free (on request) to members in India and Sri Lanka and price £1 inc. postage and packaging to other OBC members. Also available from OBC is their booklet 'A selection of the Birds of Sri Lanka'. 192 species are portrayed, including all the common and some of the less common birds to be seen in the country. See 'Club News' for details. (eds)

THE BIRDS OF WALLACEA: SOME OPPORTUNITIES FOR FIELD STUDY

The Birds of Wallacea (BOU in press), as well as drawing together much of what is already known about the region's avifauna, also highlights particular aspects which warrant further investigation. The following gives details for just some of these problems.

1. Only five species of petrels and shearwaters have been recorded, but five more are either erroneously identified or overlooked. Movements of some species must be regular through parts of Wallacea, but this group has generally been overlooked by collectors and observers. Bulwer's Petrel *Bulweria bulwerii*, Streaked Shearwater *Calonectris leucomelas*, and Wedge-tailed Shearwater *Puffinus pacificus*, are apparently regular migrants through Wallacea, but there are very few records (only one of Bulwer's Petrel).

2. Three subspecies of White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* occur close to Wallacea (nominate *lepturus*, *fulvus*, *dorotheae*), but only four sight records are known, and the subspecies is undetermined. Does it breed anywhere in Wallacea, or is it only a seasonal visitor?

3. Both Black-crowned Night-Herons *Nycticorax nycticorax* and Nankeen Night-Herons *N. caledonicus* have been recorded from north Sulawesi and Flores. Possible sympatry in north Sulawesi remains unconfirmed after a century of debate. Is the Black-crowned only a visitor? Overlap between the two night-herons in areas north and west of Wallacea has also been recorded. The situation remains to be satisfactorily resolved.

4. The current status of ibises is unknown. The Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* may breed somewhere in Wallacea; this is suggested by observations of large flocks in south Sulawesi 40 years ago. The Asian White Ibis *Threskiornis melanocephalus* and Australian White Ibis *T. moluccus* were long thought to overlap in Wallacea, but the former is only known by old sight records in central Sulawesi and the latter by scattered records from the Moluccas and eastern Lesser Sunda Is., where there is evidence of breeding from Seram (75 years ago).

5. Bat Hawk *Macheiramphus alcinus*: This was first discovered in Wallacea (central Sulawesi) in 1981. If it is a resident, which seems likely, it may represent a distinct subspecies bridging

the gap between Borneo and New Guinea.

6. The Lesser Fish-Eagle Ichthyophaga humilis is known from Sulawesi, Peleng and possibly Buru. There has been confusion in the past with records of the Grey-headed Fish-Eagle I. ichthyaetus, which is unconfirmed for Sulawesi (past records were apparently erroneous, but recent sight records suggest the situation needs further investigation).

7. Peregrine Falcon Falco peregrinus: Its status on Timor is unclear. The resident form ernesti presumably occurs there (known by scattered populations in the Lesser Sundas and Sulawesi areas), but migratory calidus possibly occurs too. The migratory japonensis probably reaches Wallacea, but is as yet unconfirmed.

8. The Common Moorhen Gallinula chloropus and Dusky Moorhen G. tenebrosa apparently overlap on some islands of Wallacea, but their status is unclear. Both have been recorded on Sulawesi, Sumbawa, Flores and Sumba. On Sulawesi they may replace each other in different parts of the island, but in the Lesser Sundas it would appear that the Common Moorhen is replacing, or has replaced, the Dusky Moorhen. More field work is needed.

9. 38 species of waders have been recorded (including two endemic woodcocks), and 18 others may occur. The review of existing records indicates that much more needs to be done on the seasonal occurrence and status of migratory waders, and the few resident species. Wallacea is part of the Eastern Palaearctic/ Oriental/Australasian migration system, but it may also be an important wintering area for some waders. Much more field work is needed.

10. The Pomarine Skua Stercorarius pomarinus was only confirmed for Wallacea a few years ago, but many sight records of this and other skuas near Wallacea suggest that the Pomarine must be more widespread.

11. No gulls have been recorded yet, but the Common Black-headed Gull Larus ridibundus has been recorded near Wallacea (Bali and west New Guinea) and may well occur in Wallacea itself.

12. 57 species of pigeons and doves have been recorded (26 endemic). Much remains to be learned of their ecological

distribution and relationships throughout Wallacea. All endemic species are very poorly known. Several problems concerning pigeons are discussed at length in the book.

13. 37 species of parrots recorded (25 endemic). As with pigeons, general information on distribution etc. is limited. For example, the racquet-tail parrots *Prioniturus* spp., confined to Wallacea and the Philippines, generally replace each other, but there are some records of overlap in Wallacea (and the Sulu Archipelago, Philippines) which need clarification.

14. 26 species of kingfishers have been recorded (11 endemic). There are similar problems of distribution as with both the pigeons and parrots. For example, the Collared Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris* is known by the nominate form throughout Wallacea, except the Talaud Is., where it appears to overlap with the endemic Obscure Kingfisher *H. enigma*. However, ecological segregation, if at all, is unclear, and there is a possibility of the Philippine *H. c. collaris* occurring as a migrant, but this is as yet unconfirmed. It is worth noting that this form has been found as a visitor in parts of north Borneo.

15. The Blue-breasted Pitta *Pitta erythrogaster* and the Hooded Pitta *P. sordida* overlap in north Sulawesi and Sangihe I. Only the former is known from the Talaud Is., between Sangihe and their overlapping Philippine ranges. Is there an as yet undiscovered population of Hooded Pitta on Talaud (the largest island is very pooly known)?

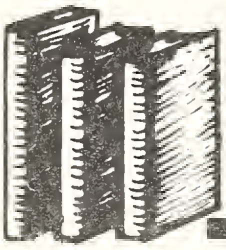
16. Banggai Crow *Corvus unicolor*: This is only known by two old specimens from the Banggai Is. It appears to be related to the Sulawesi Pied Crow *C. typicus*, and not a form of the Slender-billed Crow *C. enca*. However, recent evidence suggests *enca* may also occur. Do two crows co-exist on Banggai, or is *enca* a recent coloniser as a result of extensive forest clearance?

17. The closely related Olive-backed Sunbird *Nectarinia jugularis* and Flame-breasted Sunbird *N. solaris* generally replace each other, but on three islands (Sumbawa, Flores, Lomblen) both species occur. Do they co-exist or replace each other in different parts of these islands?

18. Indonesian Serin *Serinus estherae*: This was only discovered in Wallacea (Sulawesi) in 1980. The isolated population from the little known, southern Mt. Rantekombola has been separated as *renatae*, but the northern population from mountains in the Lore Lindu area is only known by sight records. Is it also a distinct form (as is characteristic of the relict distribution of this species)? Does it occur on other isolated mountains of Sulawesi? This species demonstrates the large need for further exploration of Sulawesi mountain tops.

Obviously, some problems in Wallacea require lengthier discussion than is possible in this brief note. But I hope this selection of items indicates some of the great potential for ornithological investigation in Wallacea.

Murray D. Bruce, 8 Spurwood Road, Turramurra, NSW 2074, Australia.



Reviews

CHENG, T-S. 1976. *Distributional List of Chinese Birds.* Revised edition, Pp. 1218; 5 tables, 829 maps, 3 indices. Beijing. (in Chinese with English synopsis). £7.10.

This modestly titled volume by China's foremost ornithologist is actually a full, formal checklist dealing with the 1166 bird species recorded within the area of the People's Republic of China and the island of Taiwan. It is an essential working tool for all students of the avian biogeography of the People's Republic of China itself, Taiwan, as well as surrounding areas such as the Himalayas, Mongolia, southern Siberia, and the northern parts of South-East Asia.

The bulk of the book is taken up by a 968-page systematic list (in Wetmore order), including 828 maps of selected species. All 1166 species have been recorded in some part of mainland China and Taiwan as residents, summer breeders, passage migrants, winter visitors, or as vagrants. Each scientific name for genus, species, subspecies is followed by author, date, and source of publication, with the Chinese names provided for each species and subspecies. The English name of each species is also given. Russian names are provided for each species on the Soviet list, which is very useful for those wishing to follow up references in Russian literature. Symbols are used on the maps to indicate status in a given area and also to indicate subspecies - some maps feature more than one species. To anybody who understands something of China's geography, climate, and vegetation, as well as the birds themselves, these maps convey a wealth of information. The systematic list is preceded by an introduction and a list of type localities in both Roman and Chinese orthographies which is most helpful for Chinese readers unfamiliar with European languages. After the systematic list comes Map 829 showing Professor Cheng's division of China into 16 sub-areas; these in turn are grouped into 7 areas based upon physiographical, climatic and vegetational criteria. There is a broad west-east line indicating Cheng's division of the Palaearctic and Oriental regions. However it should be noted that a great many 'northern' species range well south of this line, while quite a few 'southern' species range well north of it.

A 100-page table follows this map and shows the status of all species and subspecies in each of the 16 sub-areas shown on Map 829. Readers ignorant of the Chinese language, may find this section the most useful in the whole book. Following this table is the complete bibliography relevant to Chinese ornithology - 953 titles of which 121 are in Chinese, with the remainder roughly divided between English, German, Russian, and French. Three indices of bird names - Chinese, English and scientific - conclude the work.

The whole thing is a great credit to Professor Cheng and the printers who produced such clear maps. As the book is still in print and available the price of £7.10 is low in terms of current money values; £100 per copy would still be a cheap price to pay for a book which is a great pleasure to use, and a great pleasure to review.

D.T. Lees-Smith

CHANG, J.W. 1980. A Field Guide to the Birds of Taiwan. Pp. 324; 390 colour illustrations; 149 maps. Tunghai. Mainly Chinese text. £22.50

CHANG, J.W. 1984. The Water Birds of Taiwan. Pp. 191; 226 colour photographs; 61 line drawings; 3 maps. Chinese text.

Most publications on Taiwanese birds are in Chinese, and the two books reviewed here are no exception. The field guide covers 390 species, 14 of which are endemic species or races. All 390 species in the text are illustrated. For use in the field many of the often semi-diagrammatic paintings are adequate, but from an artistic viewpoint most are too bright and slightly stylised. The major part of the text is in Chinese, brief notes on family characteristics and species status are given in English. That the bulk of the text, including Taiwan's place in Asiatic migration routes, is in Chinese means that much of the 'meat' of the book is inaccessible to a large potential market. However, distributional maps for most species are useful.

Compared with Severinghaus and Blackshaw's (1976) A new guide to the birds of Taiwan, the Field Guide is a significant improvement and a valuable companion in the field.

The Waterbirds of Taiwan is very different from the Field Guide, being a selection of photographs, accompanied by a text solely in Chinese. Most of the photographs are very good, some are superb. Many feature Asian species for which photographs are very scarce. As such, they are a treasure trove for rarity enthusiasts in search of eastern enlightenment.

Many noteworthy species are illustrated, including Chinese Egret Egretta eulophotes, Japanese Night-Heron Gorsachius goisagi, Swinhoe's Snipe Gallinago megala and the enigmatic Saunders' Gull Larus saundersi. In all 157 species are covered in the 226 photographs. The inclusion of certain species such as Richard's Pipit Anthus novaeseelandiae is perplexing, whilst other more obvious "waterbirds" are excluded. There are numerous instances of mis-labelling. Most of these must have occurred during the book's final stages of production - spotting them is good fun! The publication of so many photographs of species rarely captured on film is a noteworthy enterprise.

Rod Martins

Announcements - Requests

Pen Friend Request

"I read about the Oriental Bird Club in Dutch Birding. Could you please introduce me to someone who would be my pen pal? I am an avid birder and member of the Wildfowl Society of Taipei". Those willing to correspond with Lin Chih-Cheng on a regular basis should write to him at the following address: Taiwan Fertilizer Company, PO Box 61, Miaoli, Taiwan, Republic of China. (Eds).

The Nakhornsawan Bird Club

The Nakhornsawan Bird Club was founded in 1982 and is based at LaSalle Chotiravi College, Nakhornsawan. The main aims in founding the club were to promote an interest and encourage the study of birds in the province of Nakhornsawan, Thailand, especially amongst children and young people.

The number of members remains small - around 20. One of our long term activities is the compilation of three lists of birds. One is of the birds observed in this province, another is of birds we have seen in a forest of a nearby province, and the third of the birds seen on Bung Boraphet - a major wetland area within the province. Another of our activities concerns ringing birds. For this we liaise with Phil Round at the Association for the Conservation of Wildlife in Bangkok and use rings provided by Dr David Wells from the University of Malaysia. In the future, we would like to publish a children's book on the birds of Nakhornsawan.

Any birdwatchers visiting Nakhornsawan and wishing to know where to watch birds in the locality are welcome to contact the club at LaSalle Chotiravi College, Nakhornsawan, Thailand, at any time. (Contributed by David Ogle).

Photographic Agency Seeks Material

Birders, a successful bird photographic agency, which holds stock on behalf of its contributors and sells reproduction rights to the publishing industry, wishes to expand its library to cover all wildlife and related subjects. Photographers who would like to have their material considered for acceptance should write for the Agency's Guidelines for Photographers at the following address: Birders, 46 Westleigh Drive, Sonning Common, Reading, Berks RG4 9LB, UK.

Photos of pipits needed

The authors of a proposed guide on Holarctic pipits, to be published in English, need photographs both for research and for publication. Particularly requested are photographs of the following: Berthelot's Pipit *Anthus berthelotii*, Blyth's Pipit *A. godlewskii*, Richard's Pipit *A. novaeseelandiae* (of subspecies *waitei*, *rufulus* and *malayensis*), Long-billed Pipit *A. similis*, Upland Pipit *A. sylvanus*, Sprague's Pipit *A. spragueii*, Pechora Pipit *A. gustavi*, Olive-backed Pipit *A. hodgsoni* (of subspecies *hodgsoni*), Water Pipit *A. spinoletta* (all subspecies), and Rosy Pipit *A. roseatus*. Colour and black and white prints are welcome, of birds both in the hand, and in the field. They would also be very interested in tape-recordings of calls and songs of the same species. All contributors will be acknowledged.

Per Alström and Krister Mild, Marholmsv. 105, S-436 00, Askim, Sweden.

Conserving Asia's Natural Heritage

The proceedings of the 25th working session of IUCN's Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas, held at Corbett National Park, India, have now been published. The extremely informative publication *Conserving Asia's Natural Heritage: The Planning and Management of Protected Areas in the Indomalayan Realm*, contains papers on protected areas in nearly all Oriental countries except China. It is available from IUCN Publications services, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL, UK, or Avenue du Mont-Blanc, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland. Price £10.50 (US $15).

Interwader Annual Report

The Interwader Annual Report 1984 is now available from the Interwader office in Kuala Lumpur. The report carries details of field surveys in Thailand, Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, Singapore, south-east Sumatra and north-west Java, along with an account of feeding studies in Malaysia and the bird-ringing workshop in the Philippines. The report is available from: Interwader, PO Box 10769, 50724 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The price is US $6.00 (US $18 airmail or US $9 surface mail).

Asian Wetlands Inventory: A request for information

ICBP's Asian Continental Section Meeting in Sri Lanka in April 1984 examined the status of wetland conservation in Asia, and concluded that the identification of important sites in the region was a priority task. The reports submitted at that Meeting have since been published under the title "Wetlands in East Asia - A Preliminary Review and Inventory".

This has provided an excellent basis for a much more detailed Asian Wetlands Inventory now being compiled under the sponsorship of IUCN, ICBP and IWRB. The Inventory, which is being funded by World Wildlife Fund, aims to summarise existing knowledge of the most important wetlands from the point of view of nature conservation in all countries from Pakistan and India, to China, Japan, and Papua New Guinea.

The International Coordinator of the project (D.A.S.) is currently on a six-month visit to south and east Asia, establishing contact with governmental agencies, non-governmental organisations, and private individuals concerned with the study and conservation of wetlands and their wildlife. Whenever possible, National Coordinators will be appointed to draw together information from all available sources in their country, and prepare a national wetlands inventory for inclusion in the international inventory. Small grants will be provided to these National Coordinators to assist them in their work, but funds are not available to support any major new field-work.

National Coordinators and other contributors have been requested to send in their material before the end of this year so that drafts can be circulated for comment early in 1987. The final report will be completed in late summer 1987, and the data put on computer for inclusion in the wetlands data base at IUCN's Conservation Monitoring Centre in Cambridge, U.K.

One of the greatest problems encountered in the compilation of an inventory of this kind is that, although a great deal of information has been gathered by visitors, much of this has never been published anywhere. Many visitors rarely if ever stray beyond the well-worn trails through famous National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries, and thus acquire little information which is new. However, an increasing number - and this applies particularly to OBC Members - are getting well off the beaten track to areas that have seldom been visited even by local wildlife biologists. Observations made during such trips, however scanty, may represent the only information available on these areas. Any OBC Member who feels he or she may have information of this kind buried in their field note books or hidden in some obscure publication is urged to provide this for inclusion in the Asian Wetlands Inventory. Full credit will, of course, be given to all contributors. General descriptions of wetlands, lists of species present, any counts of waterfowl, and details of rare and endangered species observed would be greatly appreciated. A four-page "Wetland Data Sheet" with lengthy explanatory note has been prepared to facilitate the presentation of data, and is available on request from D.A.S.

Anyone planning to visit wetlands in south or east Asia is urged to write to us at IWRB. We should be able to provide names and addresses of useful contacts in-country, and might be able to suggest areas particularly worthy of a visit.

Derek A. Scott, International Coordinator, Asian Wetlands Inventory, c/o IWRB, Slimbridge, Glos. GL2 7BX, England.

Mid-winter counts in southern Asia

Mid-winter waterfowl counts are being organised for January 1987 to help provide ornithological data for the IUCN, ICBP, IWRB Asian Wetlands Inventory. Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Burma and Nepal will be covered in what will be the first ever coordinated count of waterbirds in southern Asia. Members living in the above countries should contact the appropriate country coordinator (name and address from Derek Scott). Members living outside the above countries, who intend to visit the region during January 1987 should contact Richard Grimmett or Joost van der Ven and Derek Scott before September. It must be stressed that no funding is available at present for travel or subsistence. If a sufficient number of people are interested in the UK a training day will be organised, probably at Slimbridge.

R. Grimmett, ICBP, 219c Huntingdon Road, Cambridge CB3 0DL
J. van der Ven and D. Scott, IWRB, Slimbridge, Glos GL2 7BX

Bibliography of Philippine ornithology

A bibliography with 1152 references on Philippine ornithology has recently been published as an occasional paper of the Delaware Museum of Natural History. The bibliography, by Robert S. Kennedy, Edward C. Dickinson and Murry D. Bruce, is available from the Delaware Museum of Natural History, Kennett Pike, Greenville, Delaware 19807, USA, price US$5.00.

Recent Reports

These are largely unconfirmed reports and refer mainly to the second half of 1985 and early 1986. We urge that full details be supplied to relevant regional organisations in due course.

NEPAL

Raptor observations in the autumn included a record of 328 Amur Falcons *Falco amurensis* south of Kathmandu on 8 and 9 November (EE).

Two new species for the country were found in early winter - a male Siberian Blue Robin *Erithacus cyane* was at Nagarjung (Kathmandu) on 29 November (RR), and a Bean Goose *Anser fabalis* at Sauraha, Chitwan National Park from 12 December for at least a month (RR, TT).

SRI LANKA

Sri Lanka's first Great Bittern *Botaurus stellaris* was brought alive in an emaciated condition to the Zoological Gardens at Dehiwela on 14 October (CBC).

THAILAND

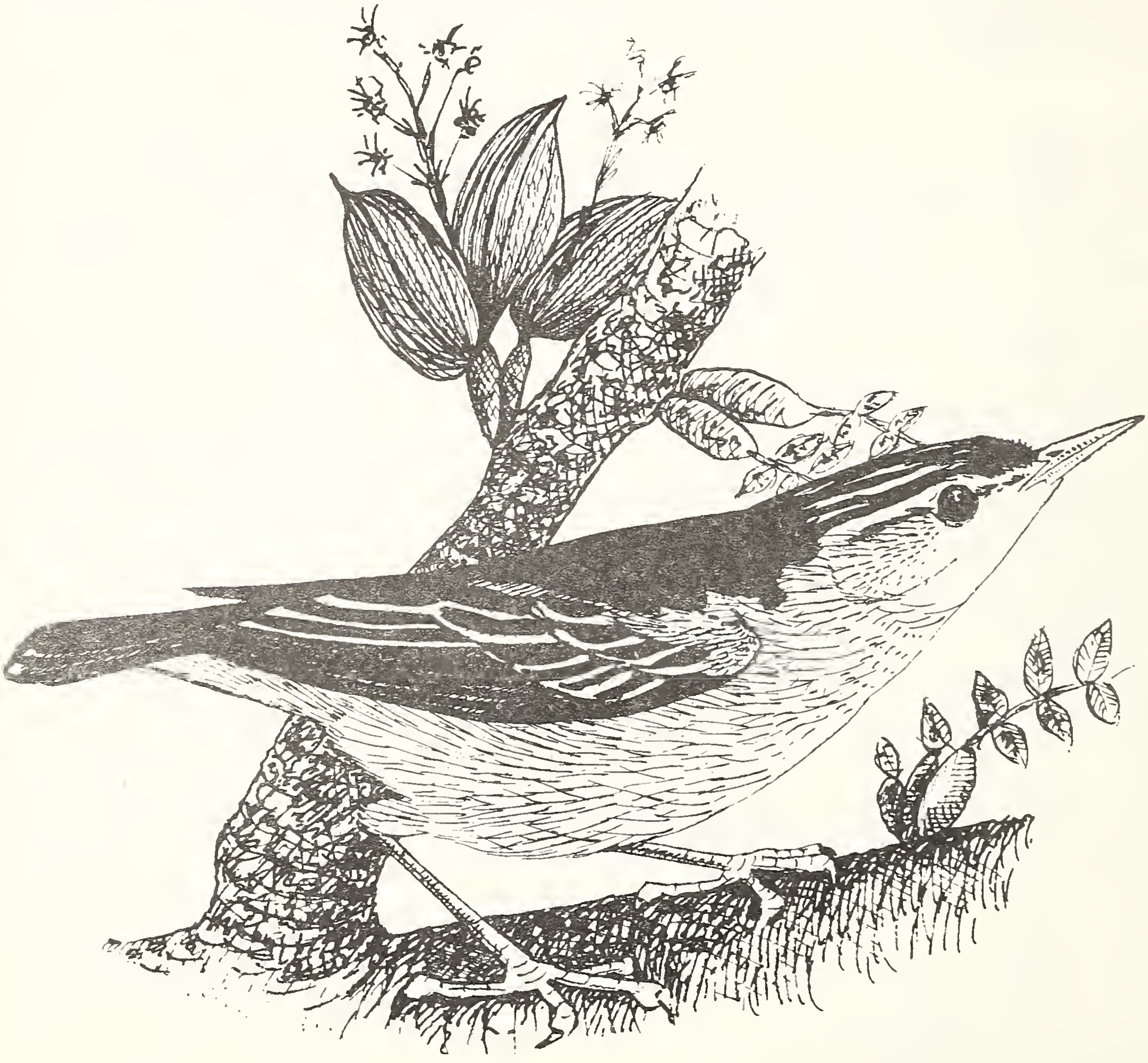
All records are for 1985, unless stated.

There were two definite reports of the Greater Adjutant *Leptoptilos dubius*: 1 at Khao Sam Roi Yot on 8 January (CB), and one in Phetchabun province on 26 June (MV). On the same date a single Black Bittern *Dupetor flavicollis* was seen on Phuket (DW, PR, PAM). At least 3 imm. Imperial Eagles *Aquila heliaca* have been reported: 1 at Khao Sam Roi Yot on 19 and 21 November 1984 (RB), probably the same bird on 8 January (CB), and 2 at Samkok, near Bangkok on 27 December 1984 (CB). A juvenile Mountain Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus nipalensis* was reported to have been taken from a nest (illegally) in Mae Sarieng District of Mae Hongson this year. Resident Peregrine Falcons *Falco peregrinus* have been reported, with a pair at Khao Sok on 28 June (DW, PR) and 1 near Nakhonsawan on 13 July (DO). A single Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata* was seen at Thaleban National Park on 15 March (KK).

Spring wader passage produced 511 Asian Dowitchers at Samut Sakhon on 7 April (PR) with an unconfirmed report of 700-1200 around this time (EW). A further six Asian Dowitchers were reported from Bangpoo on 12 May, along with 22 Great Knot

Calidris tenuirostris and a single Red Knot C. canutus (PR and BBC). Slender-billed Gull Larus genei has been recorded again, with two at Samut Sakhon on 13 March (KT).

Field work in the Tha Yang District extended the known breeding range of two species southwards: Chestnut-winged Cuckoo Clamator coromandus on 22-25 June (UT) and Oriental Scops Owl Otus sunia 8-11 July. A male Jerdon's Bushchat Saxicola jerdoni was present at Bung Boraphet on 28 August, 30 September, 12 December 1984 and 31 January (DO), constituting the first record for central Thailand. The first record of Coral-billed Ground Cuckoo Carpococcyx renauldi for northern Thailand was reported from the Doi Pha Chang Wildlife Sanctuary last winter. The bird was illegally trapped (MV). Dusky Crag Martin Hirundo concolor was confirmed breeding at Khao Sok on 29 June (DW, PAM, PR) and also presumed breeding at Tub Kwang, Saraburi in mid-May.



Beautiful Nuthatch Sitta formosa (by R. Grimmett)

Four new species for the country have been reported this winter: a Swinhoe's Storm Petrel Oceanodroma monorhis was found dead near Pattani on 18 October (BBC); in January there was a Collared Grosbeak *Coccothraustes affinis* on Doi Inthanon and both Beautiful Nuthatch *Sitta formosa* and Grey-capped Greenfinch *Carduelis sinica* were seen on Doi Pha Hom Pok (MC, PH).

Good numbers of the rarer waders were again at Ko Libong on 23-26 December: 7-11 Nordmann's Greenshanks *Tringa guttifer*, 9 Crab Plovers *Dromas ardeola* and 107 Great Knot *Calidris tenuirostris* (JH, FL, DY).

A winter influx of birdwatchers from overseas in unprecedented numbers produced many records of vagrants or species whose status in Thailand is poorly known - at Khao Yai National Park up to 4 Silver Orioles *Oriolus mellianus* were seen, and 2 White-throated Rock-Thrushes *Monticola gularis* on 28-30 December at the same locality were exceptional (JE, DF, CR). Rarities included Thailand's 3rd Black-tailed Gull *Larus crassirostris* at Samut Sakhon on 11 November and for at least another week (BBC), an Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* at Khao Sam Roi Yot on 27 January (NR, IR), and a Lesser Whitethroat *Sylvia curruca* near Chiang Mai on 3 February (4th record).

PENINSULAR MALAYSIA

Ferruginous Wood Partridge *Caloperdix oculea* was heard calling and seen near Frazer's Hill recently (BK, DY) (no date available). This is the first sighting of this species in recent years. A Masked Finfoot *Heliopais personata* was at Kuala Lompat on 8 December (JH, FL). This is the earliest Malayan record by about two weeks of this elusive and mysterious species.

HONG KONG

A Japanese Grosbeak *Coccothraustes personatus*, the first record for Hong Kong, was at She Shan at the end of November, and an Ancient Murrelet *Synthliboramphus antiquus* seen from a boat in Rocky Harbour on 1 December was a surprise (HKBWS).

INDONESIA (East Kalimantan)

The only noteworthy records received were from East Kalimantan. There were six Storm's Storks *Ciconia (episcopus) stormi* (in three groups) along the Telen River south of Muara Ancalong on 15 April and a flock of 15-20 Common Terns *Sterna hirundo*, off the mouth of the Berau river on 15 and 18 November, was the first record for Kalimantan (DH).

Records were collated by Rod Martins from observations and contributions by the following: P. Alexander-Marrack, C.

Balchin, Bangkok Bird Club, R. Bijlsma, Ceylon Bird Club, M. Crosby, J. Eames, D. Farrow, D. Holmes, Hong Kong Birdwatching Society, P. Hopkin, J. Howes, B. King (King Bird Tours), K. Komolphalin, F. Lambert, D. Ogle, N. Redman (Birdquest), C. Robson, R. Roberts, I. Robertson (Birdquest), P. Round, T. Toohig, U. Treesucon, K. Turner, M. Vorovan, E. Welland, D. Wells, D. Yong.

Correction

The editorial panel apologise for the incorrectly captioned drawing on page 38 of Bulletin No. 2, labelled "Hooded Crane *Grus monacha*". This should have read "White-naped Crane *Grus vipio*".

ADVICE TO CONTRIBUTORS

THE BULLETIN OF THE ORIENTAL BIRD CLUB provides a forum for news, notices, recent publications, expedition results, reviews, and preliminary or interim publication of studies on Oriental Birds by contributors from all parts of the world. Publication of interim results in the OBC Bulletin does not preclude or pre-empt publication of final results as journal papers either by the OBC or elsewhere. Contributions are considered by the Editor and an Editorial committee, with contributions accepted subject to editing and refereeing where appropriate. Copies of new journals, books or reports for mention or review are always welcomed. Contributions or enquiries should be sent to the Editor, Oriental Bird Club, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds., SG19 2DL, UK.

PREPARATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Whilst the Editor is always pleased to discuss possible contributions with potential authors, and to advise on preparation, it would be helpful if the following guidelines could be adhered to:

1. Articles These should be written clearly, preferably typed, on one side of the page, with all lines double-spaced, leaving wide margins. Articles for publication in the Bulletin should be no longer than 2000 words, accompanied in all cases by a concise summary. Scientific names should appear at the first mention of each species or, if all species appear in a table, they may be given there instead. Scientific names should, where possible, follow King *et al.* 1975 'A Field Guide to the Birds of South-East Asia'.

Any tables to accompany articles should be prepared on separate pieces of paper, and be thoroughly checked. Titles of tables should be self-explanatory. Diagrams should be clearly drawn, in ink, with appropriate captions given on an accompanying piece of paper, ideally to fit a single column width of 11cm. References should be cited in alphabetical order at the end of the paper in the same style used in this Bulletin.

It would be helpful if *two* copies of each contribution could be submitted.

2. Recent reports These should follow the format in the current edition of the OBC Bulletin, and be sent to C.Robson, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG19 2DL, UK.

3. News/Information Typed or hand-written contributions should be sent to R.Grimmett, OBC, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds. SG 19 2DL, UK.

CONTENTS

Page

1 **Editorial & Club News** M. Cocker & R. Grimmett
4 **Obituary: R.S. Dharmakumarsinji** P. Gorlup
5 **News & Views** R. Grimmett
  Jerdon's Courser, Houbara Bustard, Amani Woodcock, White-winged Duck, Silent Valley National Park
8 Frugivorous birds and figs in the Oriental Region F. Lambert
11 Migration through the north-west Himalayas. Part 2 C. Williams and S. Delany
17 Records of the White-winged Duck in Sumatran Peatswamp Forest S.V. Nash & A.D. Nash
18 Sri Lanka - a note on some birdwatching areas J. & J. Banks
23 The birds of Wallacea: some opportunities for field study M.D. Bruce

26 **Book reviews**
  Distributional List of Chinese Birds D.T. Lees-Smith
  A Field Guide to the Birds of Taiwan and the Water Birds of Taiwan R. Martins

29 **Announcements**
  Penfriend Request, Nakhornsawan Bird Club, Photos of pipits needed, Photo Agency seeks material, Conserving Asia's Natural Heritage, Interwader Annual Report, Asian Wetlands Inventory, Bibliography of Philippine ornithology

33 **Recent Reports**

Front cover drawing of Brandt's Mountain Finch Leucosticte brandti by P. Hines

©The Oriental Bird Club 1986

Published by the Oriental Bird Club, c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Beds., SG19 2DL, UK, and printed by the RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy.